

# A MANIFESTO SO POVERTY ENDS NOW

Written and developed  
by young people from  
around England, 2014

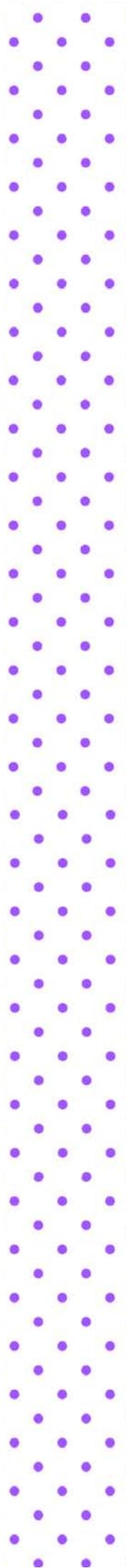
September 2014

Supported by Children North East, Charity Number 22041  
and the Webb Memorial Trust

**Webb Memorial Trust**  
Established in 1944 as a memorial to Beatrice Webb

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# FOREWORD

by Mr Liam White, 15

I think young people should have a say in poverty policy, as it helps people have an insight in to what poverty is like in the UK and how they can make a positive change, from the little things in their local community, to the big things on a national scale.

That's why I took part in this project, alongside 37 other young people, to help write a manifesto so poverty ends now. We came from around England, including some of the most disadvantaged areas, to have our say and that's why this manifesto is so strong.

You may ask what the strengths are to our manifesto? Well, it has numerous strengths. For instance, it was written by a group of young people from different geographical locations which all had different experiences, so when we

drew up the manifesto, it was drawn from all our experiences. All our strengths have made this manifesto inclusive to a wide range of problems. It's a view from the grassroots of the problems, as we all see it.

I am very proud of the actions that the group has taken to create and produce this. But it shouldn't be young people alone making these changes. I think that it should be a collective effort by young people, politicians and the community.

We wrote this manifesto to encourage people to make positive changes. I believe that who ever may read it should take it upon themselves to improve the situation surrounding poverty in their local community. We offer up that challenge to you.

# POVERTY ENDS NOW

*'It's been an exciting experience and I've met lots of new, amazing people. It's a shame that it's taken so many young people to come together to try figure this out, because poverty shouldn't happen'* Maria, 16

Poverty Ends Now is a campaign run by young people to tackle the worst parts of childhood poverty, as they see it. For over two years, around 200 young people from around England have been working together to identify what poverty looks like to them and tackle it locally. In 2014, around 40 representatives of these local action groups have worked together to develop this manifesto, and take national actions to end child poverty.

This manifesto represents the experiences and ideas from young people from:

Moss Side and Rusholme, Manchester  
Toxteth, North Liverpool and Merseyside  
Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Westminster, London  
Newcastle, Gateshead, South Tyneside, Durham and Darlington

## 2012

During 2012 and 2013, five groups of young people from some of the most deprived parts of England, around 140 in total, developed their own child poverty strategies and took actions around these, from lobbying MPs to directly fixing problems they identified, such as hunger during school holidays. In the North East, they also took the time to support seven other youth groups, around 50 more young people in total, to develop their own strategies and take actions around these.

## 2013

In 2014, 40 representatives from these groups came together over five full days to decide what they felt child poverty looked like to them and what needs to be done to help. They decided on this six point manifesto to guide actions and ensure Poverty Ends Now.

## 2014

An empty room with a blue wall featuring a pattern of small, colorful cartoon characters. A large window on the right side of the wall looks out onto a multi-story apartment building. The floor is made of light-colored wood with a herringbone pattern. Sunlight streams in from the window, casting shadows on the wall and floor. The text is overlaid on the blue wall.

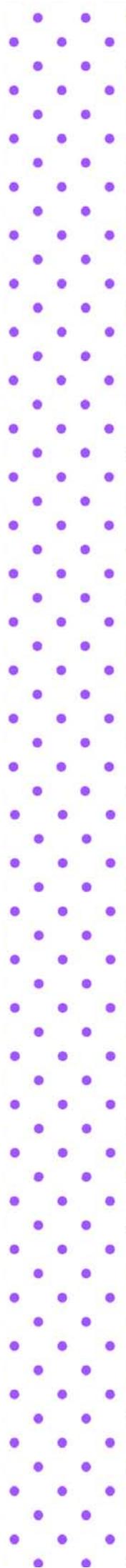
# 1. EVERY FAMILY IN BRITAIN SHOULD MEET A MINIMUM STANDARD OF LIVING, NOT JUST SURVIVING

Because everyone should have enough money to live comfortably, but right now too many of our friends worry about the essentials.

*'I think it would make life a lot more easier if parents earned more... when it comes to us and young people, we would be able to afford books instead of going to the library and stay in, buy the books and actually stay home to study'*  
15-year-old

## WHAT SORTS OF THINGS SHOULD HAPPEN?

- Improve wages, look at a living wage
- Improve benefits, including those for workers and with children
- Reduce zero hour contracts
- Protect people from payday lenders
- Where young people want to work to help out their family, enable them to do so



## 2. AN EQUAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE FOR ALL

Because everyone has a right to education and it should be equal for everyone, but right now not everyone can afford uniforms or school trips, and everyone deserves a school meal.



*'They gave us rubbish vouchers (to help afford the uniform).'*

*'You know, my mum didn't use any of them at all.'*

*'The vouchers are just 10% off if you buy the whole kit.'*

*'And then the socks!'*

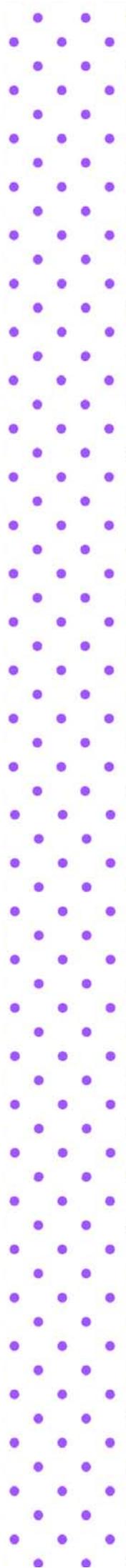
*'Nobody's going to buy them, we wanted to buy the bits that we need.'*

*'And the tie is eight quid, you know.'*

*Two 14-year-olds*

## WHAT SORTS OF THINGS SHOULD HAPPEN?

- No attainment gap between poor and non-poor young people
- The same opportunities for all students
- Uniform assistance so everyone can afford them
- Schools should pay for trips, so everyone can go on them
- No one should know if you get free school meals
- Teach governors and heads about poverty



# 3. AFFORDABLE, DECENT HOMES FOR EVERYONE

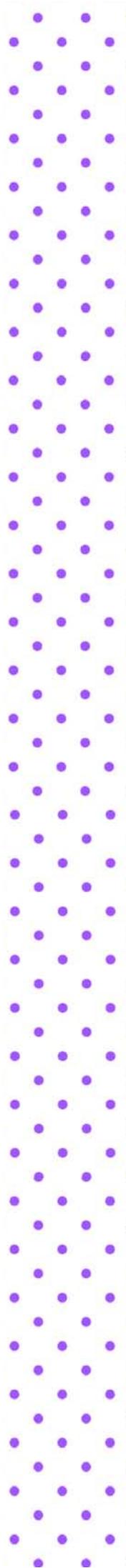
Because it's Britain, no one should live in crappy housing. This is a fully developed country, but right now so many of us live in inadequate houses.

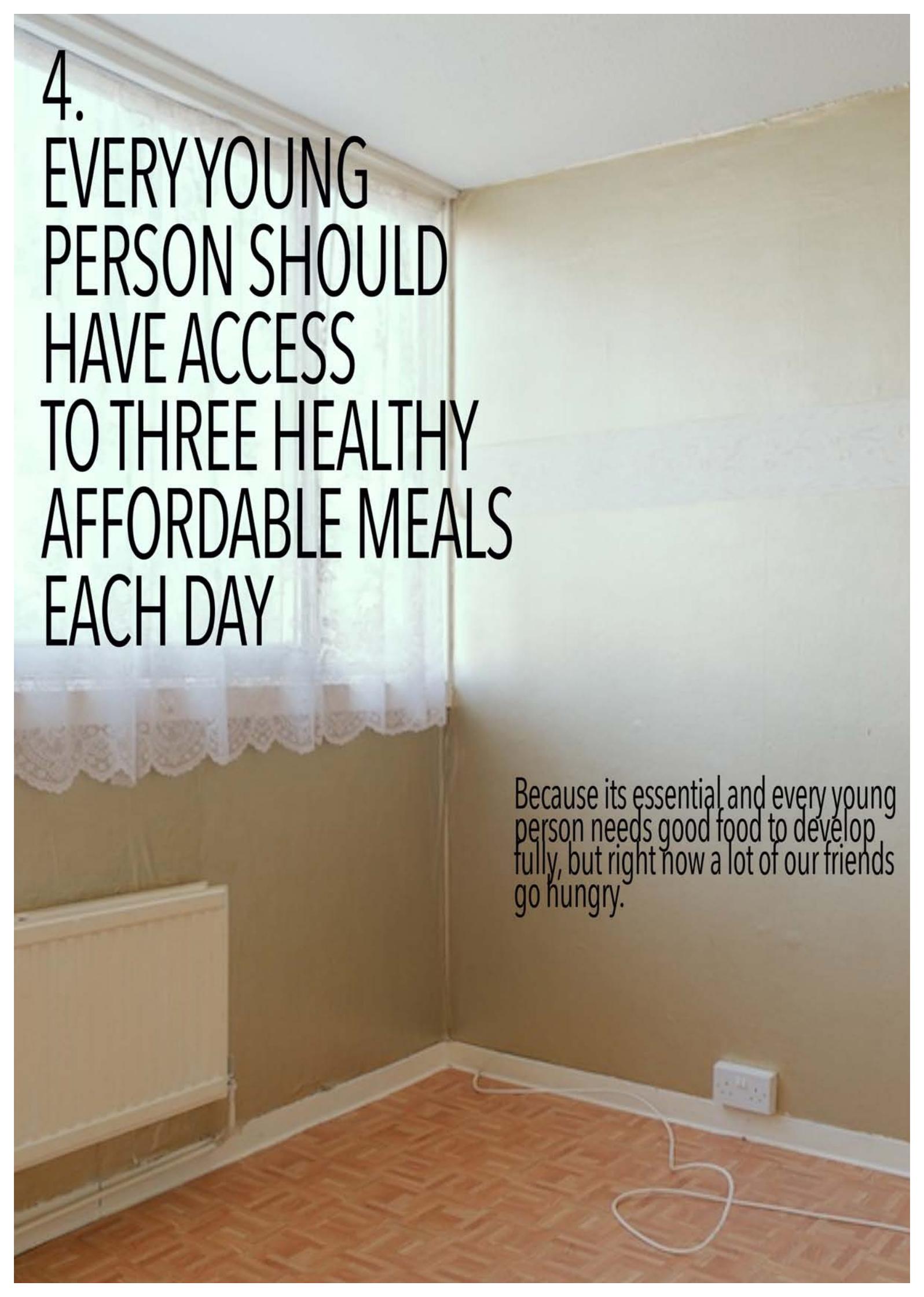


*'When our friends come to our house, they never come back.'*  
*'They'll be like, when you get a new house, I'll have a sleep over there.'*  
*Two 11-year-olds*

## WHAT SORTS OF THINGS SHOULD HAPPEN?

- House should fit family size and accommodate all children, rather than be overcrowded
- They should be warm
- They should be energy efficient
- They should not be damp
- They should be safe
- They should be hygienic
- Rent should match income – not force families in to debt
- Rent you pay should reflect what you can afford to pay



An empty room with a window on the left, a radiator below it, and a power outlet on the right wall. The floor is covered in a wooden parquet pattern. The walls are a light beige color. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

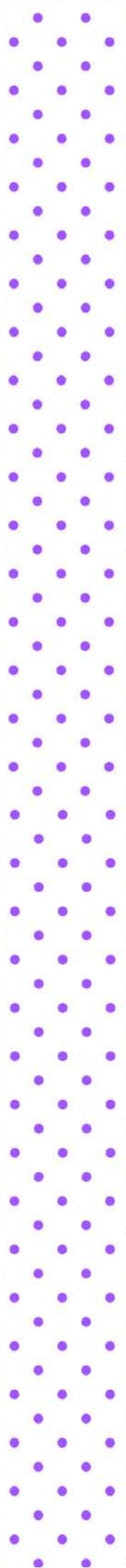
4.  
EVERY YOUNG  
PERSON SHOULD  
HAVE ACCESS  
TO THREE HEALTHY  
AFFORDABLE MEALS  
EACH DAY

Because its essential and every young person needs good food to develop fully, but right now a lot of our friends go hungry.

*'They still do (food banks) here. It's povvie. It's poverty. Like proper poverty ridden. Do you know what I mean?... You gotta provide for your family, and that's the only way you can do it. You have to swallow your pride and deal with it. It's just awful.'*  
17-year-old

## WHAT SORTS OF THINGS SHOULD HAPPEN?

- Every young person should have access to three affordable healthy meals a day
- School dinners should be available outside of school, NO HOLIDAY HUNGER!
- No malnutrition
- Free school meals for all
- Make breakfast clubs affordable



# 5. FOR ALL TO FEEL AND BE SAFE WITHIN THEIR HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

Because it wouldn't be home if it's not safe,  
and we all need a home. Right now a lot of  
young people live in places we don't feel safe.

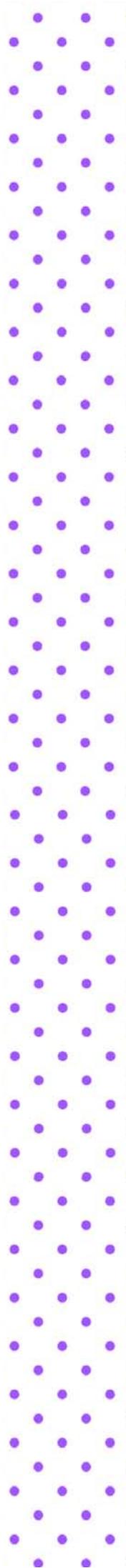


*'As soon as you walk in to (our neighbourhood) it's an entirely different feel. It's tension. It's nervy. You have to keep looking around you, behind you, in case someone's there.'*  
17-year-old

## WHAT SORTS OF THINGS SHOULD HAPPEN?

All young people should feel safe in the areas they live and in the houses they live in.

- Make areas look safe and welcoming
- Reduce crime, so young people are safe
- Increase awareness of how to stay safe
- More youth clubs, so there are safe places to go



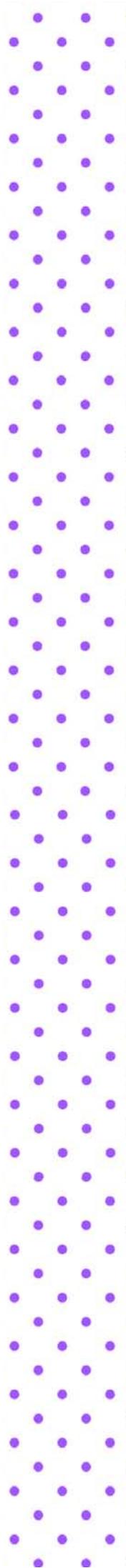
6.  
MAKE SURE ALL  
YOUNG PEOPLE  
HAVE AFFORDABLE  
TRANSPORT,  
EVERYWHERE

Because no young person should be stranded because of the price of travel, but right now it's too expensive, even for an emergency.

*'Some people have to pay like £1.60 on its own just to get to school. They can't go to school if they don't have the money.'* 14-year-old

## WHAT SORTS OF THINGS SHOULD HAPPEN?

- Free school meals (as we have them now) should mean free school travel
- There should be discount cards for learners
- If you don't get an adult wage, you shouldn't pay adult fares
- National fixed price for travel costs for all providers



# WHAT WE'RE DOING

We are taking action around all of these issues

## **1. Raising awareness around the need for decent incomes**

We have written a short, provocative play – *Brass Razoo* – about what happens to families when their incomes are inadequate. We are showcasing this in Liverpool during Living Wage Week, November 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>. We've also invited decision makers and the community to take part in a community debate after the play. We're hoping to take the play on tour and will make the script available so that other youth groups can share the story.

*'I am happy that Brass Razoo has already made a conscious contribution to my community'* Ellis, 17

## **2. Making schools more equal**

We're gathering stories and ideas about how to make schools a more equal experience, and sharing this with politicians, governors, head teachers and teachers in Newcastle on November 28<sup>th</sup>.

*'You should never be able to recognise a child in poverty, just 'cause of what they wear. It's not fair. There are people in my school who get teased a lot for being on free school meals and their scruffy uniforms. It's disgraceful'* Willow, 13

## **3. Telling decision makers what it's like to live in over-crowded housing**

We've gathered evidence about what it's like to grow up in overcrowded housing, and we're going to share this with politicians and decision makers in Parliament, date TBC.

*'I am appalled that so many young people are experiencing poor housing, and so happy to be making this small difference, not only for my friends, but for the next generation of young people'* Humaira, 17

## **4. Stepping up so all young people can eat three healthy meals a day**

Having already run free holiday lunch schemes and published free cookbooks on how to healthily feed a family cheaply, we are now launching a 'Don't Go Hungry Week' in January 2015 where, every day, one of our youth groups will be raising money for local food banks. We are also seeking funding so we can run more lunch schemes over school breaks in 2014 and 2015.

*'It's unbelievable that my friends, family, neighbours, and young people are going without three healthy meals a day. I'm glad I can help tackle poverty and hopefully make a difference'* Matthew, 15

## **What we've already done**

*In Gateshead, we know that a lot of our friends consider their free school meal as their main meal of their day so, when holidays came around, they go hungry. So we decided to set up lunch clubs, we got training in how to cook and then made hot nutritious meals. This meant our friends were not hungry during the holidays and were entertained as we put on activities.*

## **5. Making young people feel safe again**

We are holding a walking tour of one of England's most dangerous neighbourhoods, Moss Side Manchester, on November 29<sup>th</sup> to show politicians and the police what it feels like to grow up in fear.

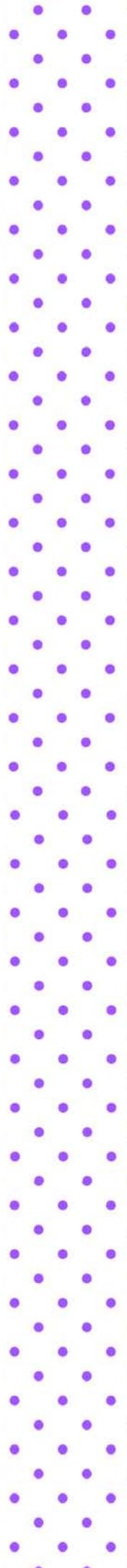
We are launching a national campaign to encourage young people around the country to submit evidence of what it's like to feel unsafe where you live, to give to politicians before the election. Send us a picture or story about where you feel unsafe and why, use the hash tag #safeagain on Twitter or Instagram between January 1<sup>st</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup>, and we'll submit your evidence to the APPG on Poverty for you.

## **6. Making transport affordable**

### **What we've already done**

*Over in Newcastle, to get a young person's discount card it costs £5. We realised some young people could not afford this, so we decided to take action. We raised £2,000 to buy 400 discount cards, by packing bags. Our plan was to distribute these discount cards in poorer schools, but before we bought 400 discount cards we spoke to Nexus, the Newcastle travel provider. We told them about our project as we thought £5 was too much, and that they were making poor people poorer. So they pledged £70,000 worth of free discount cards, so every young person could afford travel. Instead of 400 discount cards we are getting 14,000 discount cards*

We're going to keep working to distribute our discount cards in Newcastle, and we're going to write up and share this example as widely as we can, to encourage other youth groups to take similar action with their local transport providers.



# GET INVOLVED

Please feel free to come along to any or all of the PEN's events happening in the next six months, or if you're a young person, join in.

Play about the importance of decent incomes, November 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Liverpool

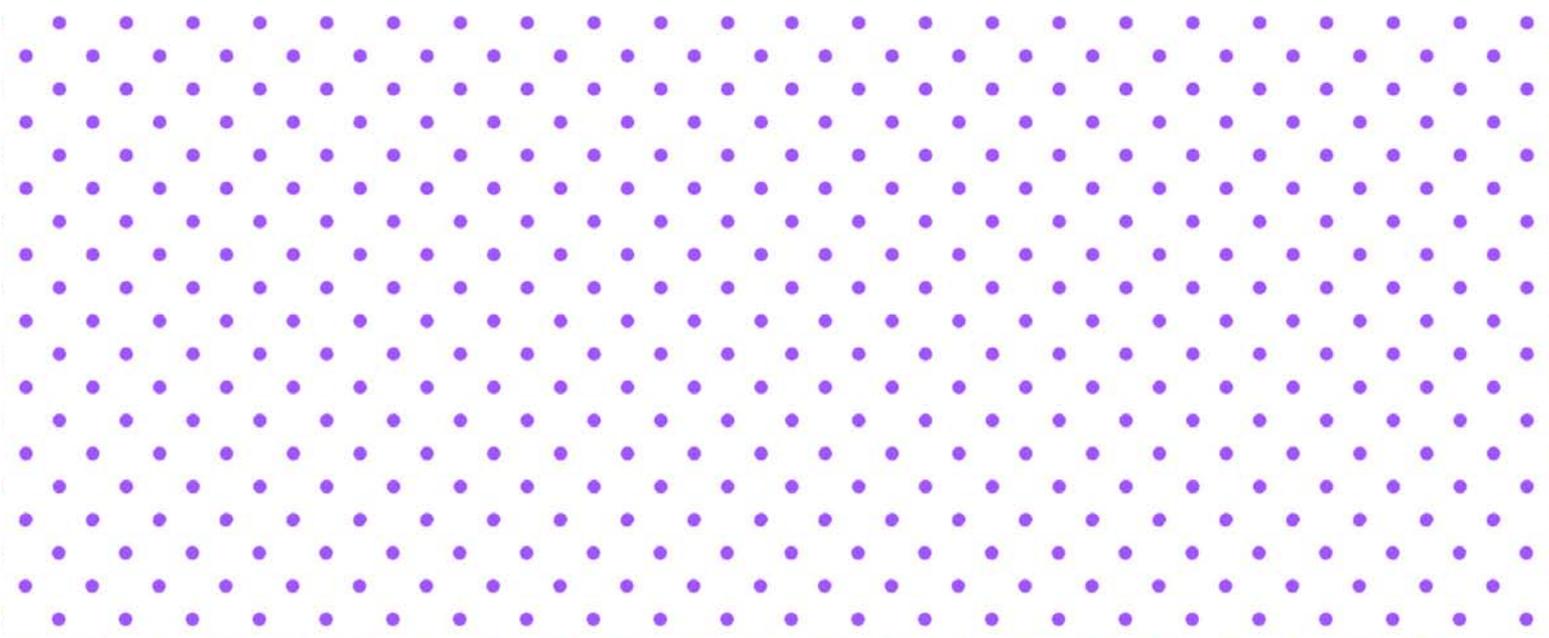
Evidence session about the impact of poverty on school students, November 28<sup>th</sup>, Newcastle

Walking tour of Moss Side and community discussion about safety, November 29<sup>th</sup>, Manchester

Evidence session about the impact of overcrowded and poor housing, TBC, London

#safeagain evidence campaign, January 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>, nationwide

'Don't go hungry week' raising money for food banks, January, nationwide



# WITH BIG THANKS TO

The Webb Memorial Trust  
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Children North East  
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Child Poverty Action Group  
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Alex Hudson  
Iain Mackenzie

Images with thanks to Alexander Christie

## ANY QUESTIONS?

Try contacting:

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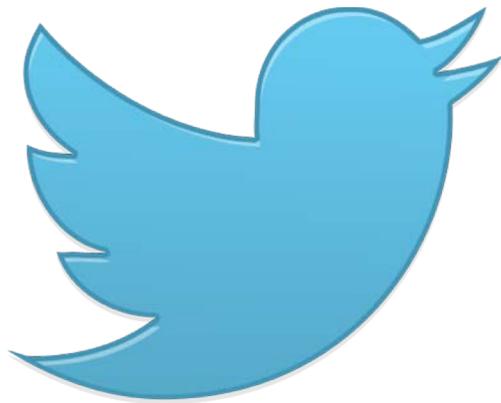
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